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Project code: TGSK09

Archaeological Survey, Molahiffe Graveyard, Castlefarm, Co. Kerry.

RMP No.: KE048 036

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Summary Townland: Castlefarm Parish: Molahiffe Barony: Molahiffe Local name of graveyard: Molahiffe Graveyard NGR: 90952 104457 RMP No.: KE048 036 No. of named tombs: 16 No. of unnamed tombs: 33 No. of inscribed headstones: 60 No. of unnamed headstones: 28 No. of unnamed markers: 31 No. of architectural fragments: 0 No. of cross slabs: 0

1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological survey conducted at Molahiffe Graveyard, Molahiffe, Co. Kerry (Figure 1). The work was undertaken in accordance with survey specifications provided by Kerry County Council.

The report comprises an accurate plan showing boundaries, the location of paths and desire lines, gravemarkers, tombs, architectural fragments, extant remains of churches or buildings and dangerous areas of ground collapse. A photographic survey of headstones and gravemarkers is linked back to the survey drawings. Also included in the survey are written descriptions of buildings, cross-slabs and early enclosures; statements on the condition of these buildings; suggested suitable/necessary remedial action that may be needed to secure these structures; breaches of the boundary walls, open or collapsed tombs and the condition of paths and entrance gates. A photographic survey of damaged and dangerous structures or features is also included.

2 Site description and location

Molahiffe graveyard is located within the townland of Castlefarm in County Kerry, 500 meters southwest of Molahiffe Castle, c.14.5 kilometres north of Killarney. Lough Laune and the Macgillycuddy Reek Mountains are located 12.5km and 16km to the south respectively. The graveyard is situated c.100 meters up a gravel track, off the main road, on a rise with a commanding view of the local area. The graveyard is situated 2.5 kilometres west of the N22 midway between Killarney and Tralee.

The graveyard is surrounded on all sides by pasture land (plate 22). The entrance is situated on the west side of the graveyard with a pedestrian gate and a stile to the right hand-side. The fringes of the graveyard are well kept and free of graves. Most of the inner part of the graveyard is dominated by tombs which by and large are very overgrown. Many of the tombs are very hard to identify and a small percentage have collapsed, making the ground hazardous under foot. The graveyard is dominated by the east wall of the church (RMP KE048 036001) which is one of only two upstanding walls left visible, the other being part of the south wall which is very overgrown and only partially intact. The centre of the graveyard where the remainder of the church would have been is on slightly raised ground but is very overgrown and may indicate that the collapsed walls of the church are now buried under a new layer of topsoil which has built up over time.

The graveyard is recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as Ke048 036.

3 Methodology

A site survey was carried out between the 14th and the 15th of October 2009 by a team of two surveyors. An electronic survey was conducted on the Irish National Grid using a Trimble GPS R6 base and rover. The GPS was supplemented with a Leica TCR407 Total Station and Panasonic Toughbook Rugged Tablet PC with Penmap software when necessary due to tree cover and resulting loss in GPS signal. All grave plots, gravemarkers, headstones and tombs were surveyed in plan as were any structural remains, boundary walls, openings, paths and desire lines. Finished survey files were exported to AutoCAD where final edits were made. A digital copy of the drawings is provided on DVD (Appendix 4).

Individual graves and/or associated markers or headstones were assigned a unique three digit grave number on the digital survey whether the latter was being carried out using GPS or with a Total Station and Panasonic Toughbook.

The photographic elements of the survey were accomplished using a Canon G9 digital camera. The camera was set to assign a consecutive sequence of unique photo numbers throughout the survey. These numbers were cross-referenced with grave numbers in a photo register. All photographs are provided on DVD (Appendix 4). Appendix 1, 2, and 3 were created using a Microsoft Access relational database using two tables. One table relates to the graveyard and the other relates to the graves, tombs and architectural features. Filtered reports were then used to create the appendices.

The descriptions throughout were compiled using standard National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) terminology and methodology where suitable, with guidelines and techniques from other established UK and Irish government sources being respected throughout (NIAH 2006, RCHME 1996, RCAHMS 2004, DEHLG 2001, EH 2004 and 2006). In addition, terminology and methodology was cross referenced to standard texts of buildings archaeology and architectural history (Curl 1999, Morris 2000, Robertson 1990).

4 Results

4.1 Boundaries

The boundary around the graveyard comprises a coursed rubble stone wall with vertical rubble coping stones. There is a gated entrance in northern end of the western wall (plate 1).

No areas of collapse or breaches within the boundary were visible. Limited amounts of vegetation were observed growing along and within the walls. Greater amounts were observed in the southern wall.

4.1.1 Recommendations

Vegetation should be controlled on a regular basis to avoid eventual degradation and collapse of the wall.

4.2 Entrance

The initial access to the graveyard is through a gate off the main road which leads to a gravel through-way up to the boundaries of the graveyard proper (plate 2). Entrances are located in the northern end of the west wall, consisting of a gated pedestrian entrance and a stile to right of it.

The entrance gate to the graveyard is in good condition and clear of any obstructions.

4.2.1 Recommendations

The gates should be treated for rust and painted as and when such measures are needed.

4.3 Pathways

No pathways exist within the graveyard. At the time of the survey the grass running the length of the walls was cut and acted as a path around the periphery of the graveyard as these areas are free of any visible graves or obstructions (plate 3).

4.3.1 Recommendations

It would be possible to lay a gravel pathway around the periphery of the graveyard where the ground is free of obstructions, however when mown as at the time of the survey this area provides sufficient access. The inner area of the graveyard is very uneven and full of overgrown tombs and graves making laying of pathways very difficult (plate 4).

4.4 Desire Lines

There are no visible desire lines within the graveyard.

4.5 Named and unnamed tombs (Appendix 3)

There are 49 tombs located within the graveyard. These by and large dominate the centre of the graveyard and the south-east corner. The majority of these tombs are very overgrown many of which are very hard to identify and a small percentage have collapsed, making the ground hazardous under foot e.g. grave no's. 075 and 088 (plates 5 and 6). Any tombs located around the periphery of the graveyard seem to be in better condition and not as overgrown, in some cases due to better maintenance and others due to their location away from the collapsed church walls e.g. grave no. 070 (plate 7). One particular area located in the south-east of the graveyard seems to have been treated with a broad spectrum weed killer (Plate 25).

Of the 49 tombs, 16 have retained their name plaques in a legible state while others have been weathered and overgrown beyond recognition.

4.5.1 Recommendations

An extensive clearance of vegetation is recommended on the majority of the tombs located throughout the graveyard. Any collapsed tombs should be assessed with urgency e.g. grave no's. 075 and 088 (as mentioned above) as these are a serious health and safety issue to any visitors to the graveyard. Good conservation practices should be followed using the principle of repair rather than replacement. However, additional material can be used where necessary to reinforce or support the existing material. If repairs are deemed necessary in the future then appropriate materials should be used, i.e. lime mortars and not hard cement as was used on grave no. 136 (plate 8), where this has compromised the appearance of the structure and the new concrete has also come into contact with the east wall of the church (plate 9).

4.6 Inscribed headstones and grave plots (Appendix 1)

A total of 60 inscribed headstones and grave plots were surveyed.

There is a wide variety of headstones and grave plots throughout the graveyard that range in date between the early 19th century and early 21st century. The oldest determinable grave is a plot with a high cross style headstone (Grave no. 113) erected by Patrick Leyne for himself and his sons in 1813 but later remodelled in 1902 (plates 10 and 11). The plot itself is cut into the northern side of the upstanding east wall of the church (plate 12). The graves conform to a rough plan with the vast majority of the headstones facing east. Graves of the name O'Sullivan, O'Connell and Daly make up a large percentage of the overall named headstones and grave plots. There are a large amount of high cross style headstones throughout the graveyard and there is a particular concentration in the south and west e.g. grave no's. 043, 045, 068, and 069 (plate 13).

4.6.1 Recommendations

In general the headstones and grave plots around the periphery of the graveyard are in good condition and as such should not be interfered with (plate 14). But as mentioned above the middle part of the graveyard is very overgrown and needs to be maintained more carefully to avoid any accidents with overgrown plots and headstones (plate 15).

4.7 Unnamed headstones and gravemarkers (Appendix 2)

A total of 28 unnamed headstones were surveyed.

The detail on most of these has been eroded away over time and in some cases the headstones themselves are broken e.g. grave no's 024 and 049 (plates 16 and 17). One headstone (Grave no. 140) was found to be displaced and turned on its side up against an overgrown tomb (plate 18).

4.7.1 Recommendations

Vegetation and debris should be cleared away from headstones where applicable.

4.8 Unnamed gravemarkers (Appendix 3)

A total of 31 unnamed gravemarkers were surveyed.

The majority of gravemarkers are rubble stones indicating the place of a burial. The graves are often placed in seemingly random locations and in some cases have a large amount of vegetation growing on and around them, sometimes to the point of obscuring them completely. These gravemarkers indicate a lower class status and were particularly prevalent during the Famine period. Also included are four unnamed iron crosses (Grave nos. 033, 109, 129, and 132).

4.8.1 Recommendations

These gravemarkers should be cleared of vegetation and the grounds routinely mowed in order to improve the visibility of the obscured stones. The iron crosses, which are in good condition, should

be kept clear of vegetation and debris and could be treated for rust and subsequently painted to prevent further rusting and deterioration.

4.9 Church in ruins

Of the surviving remains of the original church only the east wall is still fully up-standing (plate 19 and 20) as well as a small piece of the southern wall which is very overgrown (plate 21). The centre of the graveyard where the remainder of the church would have been is on slightly raised ground but is very overgrown and may indicate that the collapsed walls of the church are now buried under a new layer of topsoil which has built up over time. The wall consists of roughly dressed mortared rubble stone with a gable, to east of graveyard, surviving to height of c.6m, with a maximum thickness of c. 1m. A single lancet window opening survives, having a dressed stone sill, surround and archivolt to the exterior (east) elevation (plate 23) and a deeply recessed hollow chamfered reveal to the interior elevation having dressed limestone surrounds and radiating voussoirs (plate 24).

4.9.1 Recommendations

Steps should be taken to secure the ruin from further collapse through the control of vegetation from on the walls and the re-pointing the structure where feasible.

5 Summary of recommendations for future management / conservation

- The vegetation throughout Molahiffe graveyard should be brought under control and tended to regularly in order to prevent the degradation and collapse of the enclosing walls and interior features including tombs, gravemarkers and headstones.
- The use of broad spectrum weed killers should not be used during the clearance of vegetation under any circumstances.
- The removal of deeply rooted vegetation should be carried out under archaeological supervision in order that the full extent of some of the concealed and partially concealed burial markers and tombs may be exposed without damaging them.
- A rust treatment and fresh coat of paint should be applied to gates to and iron crosses to prevent degradation.
- The issue of a number of collapsed tombs which were identified above should be addressed
 as these are a health and safety concern.
- The addition of clearly identifiable gravel pathways would greatly benefit the grounds by reducing foot traffic on inappropriate areas. This would prevent any further damage to graves and gravemarkers underfoot and health and safety concerns due to the uneven surface and obscured gravemarkers and collapsed tombs. Maintaining mowed clear-ways would be the most practical solution.
- Measures should be taken to secure the church ruin from further collapse through the control
 of all vegetation and then re-pointing of the structure using appropriate materials.

- The publication: The care and conservation of graveyards by the office of public works should be consulted prior to the carrying out of any maintenance work on the burial grounds or church.
- An information board presenting historical and archaeological information would make an excellent addition to the site.
- Any proposed ground works should be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

References

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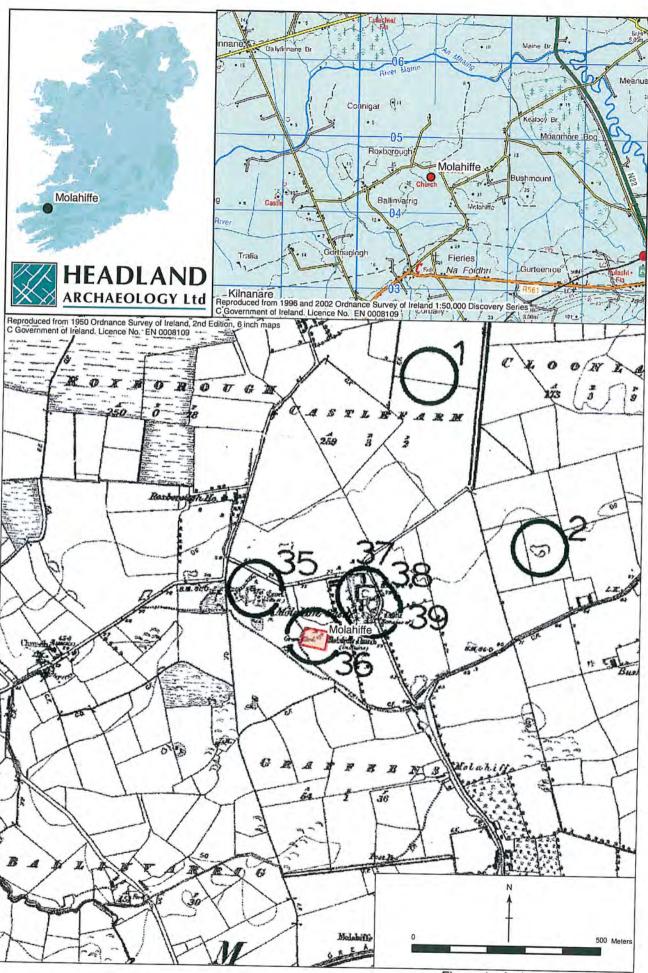
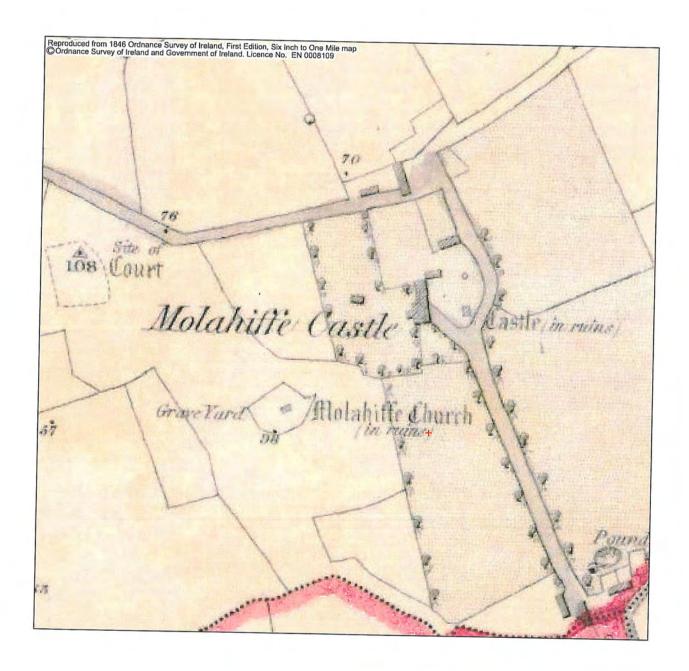


Figure 1 - Archaeological Survey Molahiffe Graveyard, Co. Kerry, site location





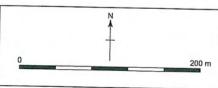


Figure 2 - Kerry County Council Graveyard Surveys, Molahiffe, County Kerry: Site location with extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map.



Figure 3 : Archaeological Survey, Molahiffe Church Ruins & Graveyard, Co. Kerry.







Plate 01 - Gate with stile from outside, facing east.jpg

Plate 02 - Entrance from main road, facing south-east.j...





Plate 03 – Area of shortly trimmed grass used as path ...

Plate 04 - Central overgrown area of Graveyard, facing...



Plate 05 - Grave no. 075, collapsed tomb.jpg

Plate 06 - Grave no. 088, collapsed tomb.jpg



Plate 07 - Grave no. 070, tomb.jpg

Plate 08 - Grave no. 136, tomb with concrete roof.jpg





Plate 09 - Grave no. 136, showing concrete cover encr...

Plate 10 - Grave no. 113, facing south-east.jpg



Plate 11 - Grave no.113.jpg



Plate 12 – Grave no. 113, showing plot cutting into east \dots





Plate 13 - Photo showing High Cross style headstones,...

Plate 14 - Photo of maintained graves at western end o...





Plate 15 - Photo of overgrown area near centre of grav...

Plate 16 - Grave no. 024, broken headstone.jpg





Plate 17 - Grave no. 049, broken headstone.jpg

Plate 18 - Grave no. 140, out of situ headstone turned ...





Plate 19 - Exterior elevation of east wall of church, faci...

Plate 20 - Interior elevation of east wall of church, facin...





Plate 21 - Remaining part of south wall of church, facin...

Plate 22 - View of graveyard and surrounding grazing I...

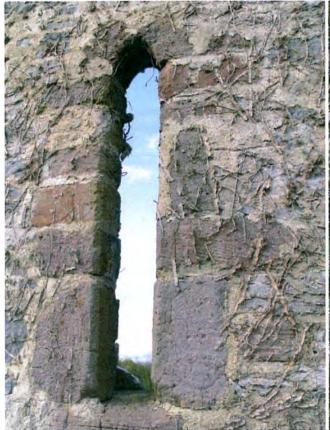


Plate 23 - Lancet window in east wall of church from o...



Plate 24 - Lancet window in east wall of church from s...



Plate 25 - View of south-eastern area where weed kille...

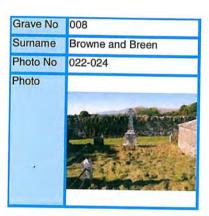
Appendix 1 - Inscribed Headstones





Grave No	101
Surname	Broderick
Photo No	217
Photo	At l











Grave No	005
Surname	Casey
Photo No	013-014
Photo	

Grave No	013
Surname	Clifford
Photo No	035
Photo	



Grave No	042
Surname	Cronin
Photo No	085-086
Photo	





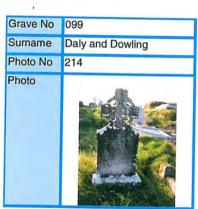
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Surname	Daly
Photo No	092-093
Photo	





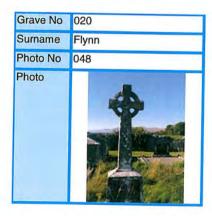


Grave No	126
Surname	Daly
Photo No	261-262
Photo	

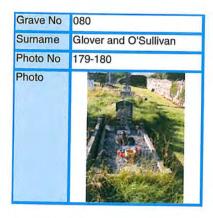


Grave No	079
Surname	Duggan
Photo No	177-178
Photo	

Grave No	016
Surname	Finnerty and O'Connor
Photo No	041-043
Photo	



Grave No	044
Surname	Foley
Photo No	089-091
Photo	





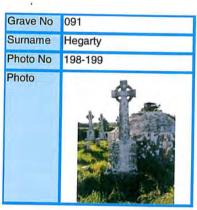
Grave No	144
Surname	Griffin
Photo No	301
Photo	Plants Pl





Grave No	163
Surname	Hayes
Photo No	336-337
Photo	





Grave No Surname	090 Herlihy
Photo No	196-197
Photo	

Grave No	068
Surname	Hickey
Photo No	144-145
Photo	



Grave No	143
Surname	Horgan
Photo No	300
Photo	





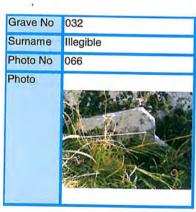
Grave No	027
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	057
Photo	





Grave No	104
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	221
Photo	





Grave No Surname	134 Illegible
Photo No	275
Photo	

Grave No	129
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	265
Photo	



Grave No	141
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	297-298
Photo	





Grave No	037
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	074
Photo	





Grave No	024
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	053
Photo	





Grave No	108
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	225
Photo	

Grave No	109
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	226
Photo	



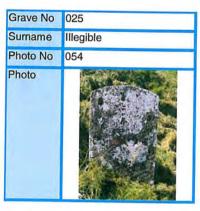
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Surname	Illegible
Photo No	176
Photo	





Grave No	116
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	241
Photo	





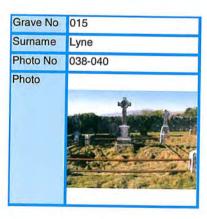
Grave No	082
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	183
Photo	





Grave No	014
Surname	Keane
Photo No	036-037
Photo	

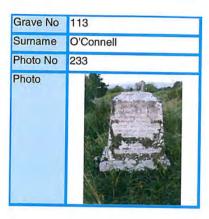
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Surname	Leary
Photo No	305
Photo	



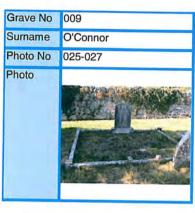
Grave No	133
Surname	Lynes and Leyne
Photo No	269-274
Photo	











Grave No	022
Surname	O'Donoghue
Photo No	050-051
Photo	

Grave No	069
Surname	O'Leary
Photo No	146-149
Photo	



Grave No	055
Surname	O'Riordan
Photo No	109-110
Photo	

Grave No	054
Surname	O'Riordan
Photo No	107-108
Photo	



Grave No	011
Surname	O'Sullivan
Photo No	029
Photo	





Grave No	053
Surname	Sheehan
Photo No	105-106
Photo	

Grave No	157
Surname	Spring
Photo No	321-322
Photo	



Grave No	124
Surname	Sullivan or O'Sullivan
Photo No	259
Photo	

Grave No	103
Surname	Teahan
Photo No	219-220
Photo	

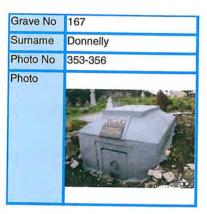


Appendix 2 - Unnamed Headstones and Gravemarkers

Grave Numb		Notes	Photo Numbers
019	Grave		047
021	Grave		049
023	Grave		052
026	Grave		055-056
028	Grave		058
030	Grave	Overgrown	064
034	Grave		068
036	Grave		073
046	Grave		098
050	Grave		102
051	Grave		103
052	Grave		104
056	Grave	The second secon	111
057	Grave		112
096	Grave		209
105	Grave	Overgrown	222
127	Grave		263
128	Grave		264
130	Grave		266
131	Grave		267
150	Grave		313
152	Grave		315
153	Grave		316
154	Grave		317
155	Grave		318
159	Grave	Heavily overgrown	327
162	Grave		335
			100

Appendix 3 - Tombs





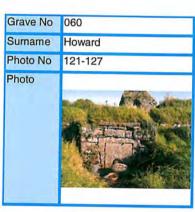
Grave No Surname	136 Fitzgerald
Photo No	280-283
Photo	

Grave No	164
Surname	Flynn
Photo No	338-343
Photo	









Grave No	072
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	160-161
Photo	

Grave No	067
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	140-143
Photo	



Grave No	065
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	135-136
Photo	





Grave No	062
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	130
Photo	











Grave No Surname	040 Illegible
Photo No	080-083
Photo	

Grave No	029
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	059-063
Photo	



Grave No	059
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	119-120
Photo	





Grave No	158
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	323-326
Photo	

Grave No	147
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	306-309
Photo	



Grave No	138
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	289-291
Photo	

Grave No	135
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	276-279
Photo	



Grave No	075
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	169
Photo	

Grave No	122
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	253-254
Photo	



Grave No	119
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	246-248
Photo	



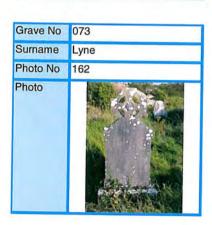


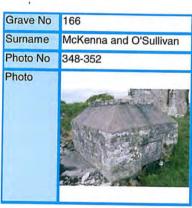
Grave No	114
Surname	Illegible
Photo No	238-240
Photo	

Grave No Surname	110 Illegible
Photo No	227-230
Photo	



Grave No	058
Surname	Kelleher
Photo No	113-118
Photo	





Grave No	004
Surname	McMahon
Photo No	005-012
Photo	

Grave No	70
Surname	O'Connell
Photo No	150-156
Photo	



Grave No	168
Surname	Scott
Photo No	357-362
Photo	

Grave No	007
Surname	Spring
Photo No	017-021

-7

T